

**Burke Gilman Trail Redevelopment Project**  
May 16, 2006 Citizens Advisory Group Meeting

**Meeting Summary**

## **Meeting Attendees**

### **CAG Members**

Tim Ahern  
Kate Comtois  
Gary Elmer  
Tom French  
Mark Gibbons  
Sandy Koppenol  
Michelle LeMoine  
Dean Peterson  
Jon Skamser  
Alison Starling  
Stuart Strand  
Jeff Weissman  
Mark Withers

### **King County Staff**

Jessie Israel  
Deborah Browne

### **Design Staff**

Kristen Lohse  
Terry Reckord

### **Facilitation Staff**

Maureen Dunn  
Margaret Norton-Arnold

## **Welcome and Overview**

### ***Margaret Norton-Arnold***

Margaret welcomed CAG members and explained that the primary purpose of the meeting was to gather committee feedback on the design schematics as well as the upcoming public meetings. The following handouts were distributed: meeting agenda, draft agenda for the upcoming public and property owner meetings, facilitation memo and checklist. Margaret introduced Deborah Browne, the new King County manager for the Trail Redevelopment project.

## **Public Comment Period**

There were no comments during this time.

## **Cascade Bicycle Club**

***Chuck Ayers, David Hiller, Patrick McGrath***

Chuck Ayers, Executive Director of Cascade Bicycle Club, briefed the CAG on the Club's purpose and upcoming activities. There are approximately 6,500 club members, 40,000 cyclists who participate in events and 300,000 cyclists in King County. Cascade represents a small portion of Burke Gilman trail users.

One of the Club's major activities is education. Cascade just received funding for an ambassador program and will be hiring four part-time employees and training ten volunteers to educate cyclists using the trail. In addition, they will attend and distribute information at cycling events. Cascade encourages its members to obey the speed limit and to follow the rules of the road. Overall, CAG members responded positively to the ambassador program, and Chuck encouraged them to become ambassador volunteers.

Several CAG members commented that they appreciate efforts to educate groups on trail use. Another member felt that many cyclists choose not to join the club because they don't want to follow their rules; thus, there should be other ways to enforce cycling speeds. Further, if the trail is widened it is likely to attract more riders, and it is essential that the trail be designed for maximum safety.

Jessie Israel described a new trail ambassador program, sponsored by King County, which will be implemented over the summer. The goal of the program is for several hundred volunteers to educate users on trail safety. Jessie encouraged CAG members to volunteer for this program.

Cascade has also developed "five key points" of trail etiquette. It was mentioned that the City of Seattle posts information on bicycling etiquette on their website and encourages people who have may have "outgrown the Burke Gilman" to use alternative routes.

## **Proposal for Generating CAG Recommendations related to Design**

***Margaret Norton-Arnold***

Margaret had proposed an approach for the next phase of the committee's work. CAG members would use a checklist, based on their Phase One report, to evaluate the design as it is developed by MacLeod Reckord. Members agreed to use this approach and will begin this evaluation at their July meeting. A second evaluation meeting may also be scheduled in August.

## **Design Development**

***Terry Reckord***

### **Overview**

Terry Reckord presented design schematics for the trail. There are five key phases included in the design of the trail: 1) predesign, 2) schematic design, 3) design development, 4) construction documents, and 5) construction. Currently, the project is at the end of the schematic phase and MacLeod Reckord will begin developing a final design, which will include details such as identifying construction materials, the location of specific elements like retaining walls and light standards, and detailed intersection plans. Final design will begin in June 2006 and run for approximately four months. It will be followed by the development of construction documents, then bidding from contractors. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2007 and will last approximately five months.

### **Special Studies**

Over the past three months, a number of studies have been completed: an environmental site assessment, a sensitive areas study including wetland and stream delineations, traffic analyses, geotechnical studies and a cultural resources study. The draft environmental site assessment identified two old gas stations on property abutting the trail which may require additional soil analysis.

### **Bridges**

Two bridges along the trail will be enhanced; the northern bridge over Lyon Creek is narrow and old, and will be replaced.

### **Buffer Vegetation and Fences**

MacLeod Reckord will assess the vegetation and trees that need to be removed during construction, and will determine if and how to replace them in accordance with county policy. There may be some opportunities, for example, to restore views that have been blocked by tall trees.

### **Crossings**

There are six to eight typical crossing conditions. At all crossings, except the intersections of 170<sup>th</sup> and Ballinger Way, cars will be required to yield when crossing the trail. The design includes a number of “alerts” to both cyclists and motorists that they are approaching a trail crossing, including signage, pavement markings, distinctive surfacing through the crossing, and tactile warning strips across the trail. Terry had designed two options for the crossing at 170<sup>th</sup> and Ballinger Way; most CAG members preferred the route with obvious sightlines noting that this is a particularly dangerous area. At these signalized intersections, trail users will be required to use the pedestrian signals.

### **Design Speeds**

This two-mile section of the Burke Gilman Trail will be engineered to a design speed of 20 mph, in accordance with federal and county guidelines for multi-use trails. Because the width of the trail has been determined and the railroad set the radius of the trail’s curves, the only effect of a reduction in design speed would be decreased sight distance, which would diminish the overall benefit of redesigning the trail. It would be possible to post the speed limit at 10-mph throughout the area.

### **Drainage and Slope Stability**

The trail design aims to improve drainage by cleaning culverts and replacing or resizing them where necessary, cleaning and improving drainage swales, and providing slope stabilization and/or catchment walls where necessary to limit sloughing on the trail.

### **Sight Distance**

Chicanes, vegetation, and fences will be removed at the intersection to improve sight distances. New light fixtures will be installed; these will be mounted on 12-14 foot poles and will be designed to focus the light downward and reduce light pollution into the neighborhoods.

## **Width**

The trail cross-section has been revised to address concerns and issues from both property owners and CAG members. A three-foot shoulder will be constructed on the east side of the trail and another foot-wide shoulder will be built on the trail's west side. An additional foot at the outer edge of either shoulder is required to stabilize the trail's edges. The shoulders will be soft-surface, made of stabilized crushed rock, which will be universally accessible to pedestrians, wheelchairs users and strollers. The additional trail width will be achieved by removing some fences and vegetation and adding retaining walls where necessary.

## **Committee Questions and Discussion on the Design**

CAG members were curious about how intersections will be signed; Terry responded that each intersection and crossing has unique conditions that will be addressed with special signage or markings, but in general, trail users will have the right of way and vehicles will be asked to yield.

Some members asked why vehicles have to stop and yield but the trail users don't. Terry said best practice traffic engineering standards state that the right of way is assigned to the direction of travel or leg of the intersection with the most traffic volume, and clearly the trail has the preponderance of traffic volume. The Atelier Report recommended that stop signs at driveways be removed; again, this is consistent with best practice traffic engineering standards and MacLeod Reckord is following these standards.

One member was concerned about how traffic will yield around the beach club. A member of the public recommended that the trail extend around the curb and the crosswalk at 165<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, there was an extensive conversation about how pedestrians and trail users stop for traffic and one another when the trail crosses a sidewalk or intersection.

In response to another question, Terry said that the 12 feet was determined to be the best width for a multi-use trail of this volume because it allows people to walk in pairs or ride two abreast. There was a question as to why the additional foot on the west side isn't consolidated with the shoulder on the east side; the purpose of the extra foot is to provide a refuge area for pedestrian and other users to get out of the way of cyclists.

One area that has been a particular design challenge is at NE 151<sup>st</sup> Street where the street is divided to provide access for three driveways. CAG members had wanted to see alternatives for this area other than the one presented in the Atelier Report. The MacLeod Reckord design proposes to allow the owner of the one of these homes to back out onto the trail in order to exit. Cyclists would be notified of this potential hazard with special pavement markings and signage.

Several members were concerned about this potential hazard, and wondered whether or not the County is responsible for maintaining access to the driveway. Jessie said yes, the County is obligated to maintain access to the property. One member suggested that the homeowner put up a stop sign before actually backing out onto the trail.

There was some discussion about the extent to which homeowners had built out onto King County right-of-way. Terry said that this had occurred in some instances, but that any existing structures would not be torn down, and that fences would be replaced in-kind where they do not conflict with the trail alignment or sight distance triangles.

Several CAG members felt that bollards are dangerous to cyclists, noting that the Atelier Report recommended that all bollards be removed. A majority of the CAG had concurred with this recommendation.

One member had collected a sample of the crushed rock that is similar to that which could be used for the Burke Gilman trail shoulders. He noted that, along the Centennial Trail, it had largely been overgrown with clover and was relatively ineffective as a surface medium.

## **Proposed Format for Upcoming Public Meeting**

CAG members reviewed the draft agendas for the upcoming property owner and general public meetings, and made several suggestions for adjustments.

Margaret described the advertising for the upcoming meetings:

- Newsletters were sent to approximately 2,000 Lake Forest residents.
- The meetings were also advertised in the Town Crier and on the County's website.

Members recommended that fliers advertising the meeting be posted along the trail.

Margaret said that this would be done.

The City of Lake Forest Park has hired a consultant, Huitt Zollars, to review trail design guidelines and their applicability for the Burke-Gilman Trail through the City. Though there is a great deal of agreement between Huitt-Zollars's recommendations and MacLeod Reckord's schematic design, the Huitt-Zollars report does not recommend giving trail users the right of way at crossings. More details will be forthcoming.

The next Citizen Advisory Group meeting will be held on July 18, 2006.